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→ Mr. George Bundy
Cuba

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November 13, 1962

TO: P - Mr. Robert Manning
FROM: S/P - W. W. Rostov
SUBJECT: Questions on the Public Mind.

I spent seven hours on my feet yesterday, talking to five audiences in Detroit. These covered most of the local leaders, plus several student groups. My reflections are as follows:

1. We are very near the time when the President should make a full report to the country covering a great many unanswered questions. In all my lecturing experience I never had question periods so sustained and intense. One had the feeling they could have gone on indefinitely. In general, the people I met (80% Republican) have a sense that, somehow, the Administration has done something very important; but they are confused or anxious on the following key points:

a. The distinction between the direct confrontation with the Soviet Union over the missiles and the Cuban problem: they are torn between an awareness that, somehow, there has been a victory over Moscow but that Castro and the Cuban mess are still with us.

b. They are puzzled as to why we didn't get intelligence earlier about the Soviet missiles: here an explanation of the Soviet crash erection of the missiles and the photographic evidence is helpful.

c. They are wondering what we have been saying to the Russians and what we are negotiating about: I am sure that an early publication of the President's exchanges with Khrushchev and a full accounting of what has been going on in our talks with Kuznetsov will be necessary.

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d. They wish to know how we propose to get rid of Castro; but they seemed relatively content when they were assured that we were as conscious as they that a major problem still remained and we would not abandon our commitment to do something about it.

e. There was also much interest in: the attack on India; Khrushchev's fate after the crisis; and the Sino-Soviet split which, for the first time, has impressed the American public as a reality.

2. Several thoughtful people approached me to say that they understood very well the government was prepared to face nuclear war, and that they were prepared also; but shouldn't we do something more serious about civil defense? I am reasonably confident that, if we want to move on civil defense at the next session of Congress, the memory of the crucial week of October 22 will make it more possible than last year.

3. I attach a list of questions, only some of which I had time to deal with, submitted to me at the Detroit Economics Club meeting.

Copy to: The Secretary
U - Mr. Ball
G - Mr. U. A. Johnson

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